

health reform proposal that I have been discussing with colleagues.

I come back in closing to the central reason I have come to the Chamber, and that is that in my State and in much of the country, our families are hurting and our economy is hemorrhaging. I have listed three issues where, if there was some leadership from the administration—transportation, lowering medical costs immediately, particularly on the prescription side, which has the support of Senators of both parties, the expanded access to generic drugs, and finally unemployment compensation—three steps where, with a little bit of leadership from the administration on these vital economic issues, we could take steps now that would help working families.

Let's not go the wrong way. Let's find an opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to work on key issues and go the right way, which means providing economic relief to our working families.

I know the Senator from Georgia has been waiting very patiently. I yield the floor, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

#### IRAQ RESOLUTION

Mr. MILLER. Madam President, I have signed on as an original cosponsor of the Iraq resolution that our President has proposed, and I would like to tell you a story that I believe explains why I think that is the right path to take.

A few weeks ago, we were doing some work on my back porch back home, tearing out a section of old stacked rocks, when all of a sudden I uncovered a nest of copperhead snakes. I am not one to get alarmed at snakes. I know they perform some valuable functions, like eating rats.

When I was a young lad, I kept snakes as pets. I had an indigo snake. I had a bull snake. I had a beautiful colored corn snake, and many others. I must have had a dozen king snakes at one time or another. They make great pets, and you only have to give them a little mouse every 30 days.

I read all the books by Raymond C. Ditmars, who was before most herpetologists of the day—that is a person who is an expert on snakes—and for a while I wanted to be a herpetologist, but the pull of being a big league shortstop out ran that childhood dream.

I reminisce this way to explain that snakes do not scare me like they do most people, and I guess the reason is that I know the difference between those snakes that are harmless and those that can kill you. In fact, I bet I may be the only Senator in this body who can look at the last 3 inches of a snake's tail and tell you whether it is poisonous. I can also tell the sex of a snake, but that is another story.

A copperhead snake will kill you. It could kill one of my dogs. It could kill

one of my grandchildren. It could kill any one of my four great-grandchildren. They play all the time where I found those killers.

You know, when I discovered those copperheads, I did not call my wife Shirley for advice, as I usually do on most things. I did not go before the city council. I did not yell for help from my neighbors. I just took a hoe and knocked them in the head and killed them, dead as a doorknob.

I guess you could call it unilateral action, a preemptive strike. Perhaps if you had been watching me, you could have even said it was bellicose and reactive. I took their poisonous heads off because they were a threat to me, they were a threat to my home, they were a threat to my family, and all I hold dear. And isn't that what this is all about?

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECEPTION FOR LANCE ARMSTRONG

Mr. REID. Madam President, Lance Armstrong is a man who has caught the attention of the entire American public and the world because of his athletic prowess, but more importantly than that because of his fighting back from devastating cancer. He is, of course, the greatest cyclist in the world today, and maybe of all time. This all occurred after he had a very severe bout of cancer. He is going to be in the Capitol building today.

A reception is going to be held for him in the Dirksen Building starting at 11:30. He is going to make some remarks around 12:00. Senators interested in meeting one of the greatest athletes of all time, or any staff within the sound of my voice, are welcome to come to 192 Dirksen to see the great Lance Armstrong.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION BENEFITS

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is pending legislation we certainly would like to move. We have tried very hard to get some help in this regard. This legislation gives the same number of weeks of benefits for unemployment

compensation as was given under President Bush, Sr., in the early 1990s. Only Oregon and Washington, the States with the highest unemployment in the Nation, will get a little bit more, and that is because of an extension of Congress passed in March. The March bill provided up to 65 weeks of benefits for those two States. Our bill only provides up to 7 more.

This is extremely important. We have people out of work. That might not sound like much to somebody who has a job, but to someone who does not have a job, it is everything. We have 2 million more Americans unemployed than we had 18 months ago. We have economic problems that have been kind of covered up. We have a situation where there is \$4.5 trillion lost in the stock market. If someone was going to retire with their 401(k) or their IRA, they would have to work up to 5 years more, having lost 30 to 35 percent of the value of their retirement.

I have people I welcome to Washington every Thursday. They came to me today saying they do not know what they will do because they lost so much of the value of what they will retire on. They do not know what they will do.

We need to extend unemployment compensation. We did it before under President Bush senior. There was an emergency then. We did it on more than one occasion. We only want to do it now on one occasion.

As I indicated, the bill will provide an additional 20 weeks of extended benefits for high unemployment States and an additional 13 weeks to all other States for workers who run out or about to run out of benefits.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3009

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 619, S. 3009, a bill to provide for a 13-week extension of unemployment compensation; that the bill be read three times, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and there be no intervening action or debate.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I will object for the leadership, as a ranking Republican on the committee that has jurisdiction over unemployment compensation for our side, there is not unanimous view that something should be done in this area. The most important thing is, for now, we object.

We would think in terms of looking at the economy and not only ways to support people who are in need at a time when the economy might be in problems down the road, but also to consider as part of a package things that would help the economy grow and create jobs.

It is essential we think in terms of expanding the economy when we put together packages that are needed for economic relief and not just to help